

Case 36: 43-year old male truck driver dies after being trapped and crushed beneath a truck door.

On August 16, 2003, a 43-year old male roll-off truck driver died after being crushed beneath a compactor box door. The victim was collecting trash at a paper mill and transporting it to a trash-collection site. This job involved collecting a compactor box filled with trash, loading the box onto the bed of his truck and transporting trash to another site for disposal. The compactor box holds approximately 20-25 yards of material, is constructed of 4-inch thick steel. The roll-up truck is similar to a dump truck in that the front of the truck can be raised so that when the door of the compactor box is opened, the trash will be expelled through the open door at the trash unloading station. To unload the compactor box, the operator uses a driver's side ratchet to initially pop open the compactor door that weighs approximately 1000 pounds. The operator walks over to the opened door, holds on to the door and walks it to completely open on the passenger side of the vehicle. The operator then tilts the box to empty it. When the victim arrived at the unload site, he backed up to the unload site. He opened the door of the compactor box for preparation to unload the box. The door normally opens on 3 hinges. The victim's compactor box had two cracked hinges and one broken hinge. When the victim attempted to open the box door, the door fell off backward trapping the victim beneath it. A coworker found the victim with his entire body except his head underneath the steel compactor box door, covered with trash. Emergency response was called to the scene. With the fire department's assistance, the steel door was lifted from the victim and CPR was administered. However, the victim was pronounced dead approximately one-half hour after he was discovered.

MIOSHA issued the following "Serious" citations to the employer:

1. The employer did not furnish to each employee employment and a place of employment free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm to the employee in that the employer allows damaged/defective trash container to remain in service without repairs, exposing employees to hazards of being struck by falling or flying components. (Act 154 PA of 1974, Sec. 11(a))
2. The employer did not furnish to each employee employment and a place of employment free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm to the employee in that the employer failed to train the employees how to inspect compactor container for broken welds. (Act 154 PA of 1974, Sec. 11(a))
3. The employer did not insure that materials, including scrap and debris, are piled, stacked, or placed in a container so as not to create a hazard. The employer allowed employees to stand and walk on piles of trash to push open the door on the back of the compactor box. (General Provisions, Part 1, Rule 15(1))